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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC:

Free prisoners from these death cells!

By John Parker

It appears that the U.S. government — headed by Donald Trump and enabled by Democrats who refuse to seriously check the most egregious actions of this fascist-minded, racist and sexist president — is using the coronavirus crisis to erode any democratic rights under capitalism that haven't already been wiped out by law.

In addition to the economic and health insecurity that Covid-19 is exacerbating for working and poor people, the Department of Justice has already asked Congress to allow indefinite incarceration without trial. And to deny asylum to any immigrant testing positive for the virus — a death threat to many immigrants escaping the chaos produced by the devastation of their countries of origin and the hijacking of their country's political process by Washington and Wall Street.

According to Politico, this request from Attorney General William Barr referred to “any statutes or rules of procedure otherwise affecting pre-arrest, post-arrest, pre-trial, trial, and post-trial procedures in criminal and juvenile proceedings and all civil processes and proceedings.”

This is the exact opposite of what the scientific community, human and civil rights organizations and public defenders are saying is needed to help fight the spread of the virus. Prisons and detention centers are incubators for disease. These institutions have now been transformed into death rows for all incarcerated or detained people.

Prison conditions in the U.S. have always been inhumane, with hygiene facilities and medical care dangerously lacking, encouraging sickness and death. However, these conditions are now far more dangerous — with facilities refusing soap and running water, and no possibility for social distancing during this crisis.

Crisis in Cumberland prison

Calling for solidarity and support, many of those incarcerated at North Branch Correctional Facility in Cumberland, Md., have contacted activists with the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore regarding conditions within the prison amidst the deadly pandemic.

One prisoner, James Young III, who has been incarcerated at NBCI for almost seven years, has been experiencing severe symptoms typical of confirmed Covid-19 cases for over a week. James suffers from fever, chills and respiratory distress. Correctional officers stationed at the prison have consistently denied James entrance to the prison's infirmary.

Through a friend inside the prison, James communicated: “Yeah man, I haven't been given any medicine or treatment. They won't even let me have soap. They have just been keeping me in my cell as I feel worse and worse.”

Attorney and PPA organizer Alec Summerfield spoke by phone with Terrance Mahogany, who is in the cell next to James. He stated: “I am experiencing the same symptoms as James. It is getting real bad in here. The prison is making sure the guards have masks, soap, hand sanitizer and everything else ... but not us.”

Mahogany continued: “They don't care about the inmates. We can't get any treatment. No hand-washing stations, no shower access, no nothing.



We are just being left in our cells to suffer.”

‘Land of the free’: the prisonhouse of nations

Prisoners and detainees in the U.S. remain isolated and invisible. The inhumane conditions of animals in zoos are covered much more by the corporate media than the conditions of human beings in a country that has, by far, the greatest number of residents behind bars.

As of 2015, over 2 million people are incarcerated. That's nearly 1 percent of the U.S. population. By comparison, China, with a population three times larger than the U.S., not only holds a much lower percentage of its population as prisoners — less than .2 percent — but the actual number is nearly 650,000 less than in the U.S.

Most pertinent to the dangers of Covid-19 is the overcrowding or occupancy level in U.S. prisons. That rate is also much higher than most countries. U.S. prisoners are crammed into cells at over 100 percent capacity.

On April 7, the American Civil Liberties Union sued the Oakdale Federal Detention Center in Louisiana after five people died there. The ACLU is demanding that the Federal Bureau of Prisons release prisoners who are at high risk from the virus.

So far, Attorney General Barr has ignored countless requests that he begin depopulating prisons in earnest to prevent the mass killing of prisoners and detainees through neglect during this viral crisis.

This is why Lisa Freeland, federal public defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania and co-chair of the Defender Services Advisory Group to the U.S. courts; David Patton, executive director and attorney in chief of the Federal Defenders of New York; and Jon Sands, federal public defender for the District of Arizona, wrote an opinion piece in the Washington Post on April 6 warning Barr of the life-and-death consequences of his continued inaction.

They point out: “The number of Covid-19 cases in the Bureau of Prisons are rising exponentially, at a pace far surpassing the U.S. population at large.

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MAY DAY 2020

Strike, don't die for Trump and capitalism

When the workers of the world awaken on May 1, 2020, they will confront a global situation that is very different from just a year ago.

Then, the latest capitalist crisis was only taking shape. Now, the U.S. and global economy are in free fall. The rapid collapse, rooted in the periodic capitalist crisis of overproduction, is spurred on and compounded by the deadly Covid-19 pandemic. In the U.S. alone, over 26 million workers lost their jobs in a mere four weeks, with more to come.

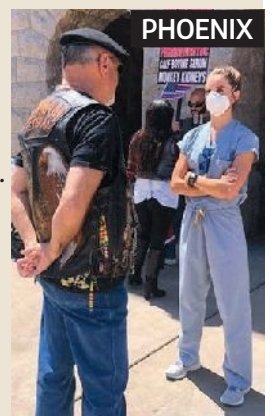
As oil prices plummet and stock markets roil, the danger of war — including world war — grows. Today, U.S. warships sail in the South China Sea as Trump escalates threats to the People's Republic of China. Iran is threatened with attack for defending its own territorial waters, while Venezuela faces the danger of invasion on phony drug trafficking charges. U.S. sanctions are exacerbating pain and misery around the globe. With Congress' help, Trump has expanded drone assassination and other war crimes that ramped up under the Bush and Obama administrations.

Here at home, workers are falling ill in large numbers as bosses and federal, state and local governments fail to provide them with adequate safety measures and personal protective equipment (PPE). The toll is being felt not only in hospitals, Amazon warehouses and grocery stores, but increasingly in meat-processing plants in the South and Midwest.

The specter of fascism hovers over state capitols with a wave of armed, white supremacist, anti-worker demonstrations egged on by the White House with funding from Big Capital. Meanwhile, in Democratic-led big cities like New York, social distancing orders are used to further criminalize Black and Brown communities. Trump and other right-wing demagogues are fueling racist attacks on Asian people with xenophobic conspiracy theories aimed at China.

But resistance is growing! Workers are walking out to demand PPE, health care and paid sick time, and gaining wide support and solidarity. Workers are learning how truly essential they are to society's basic functioning after decades of being told they are inconsequential or even a “disappearing” class. Car caravans across the country are demanding the release of our class siblings held in the racist U.S. prison system and migrant de-

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Health care workers stand up to fascists.

How Covid-19 shows U.S. dependence on workers

By Gary Wilson

Health care workers, nurses, farm-workers, transit operators, grocery store clerks, warehouse packers, delivery workers, truck drivers, dock-workers, restaurant order takers, call center workers, service and industrial workers form the backbone of the U.S. economy.

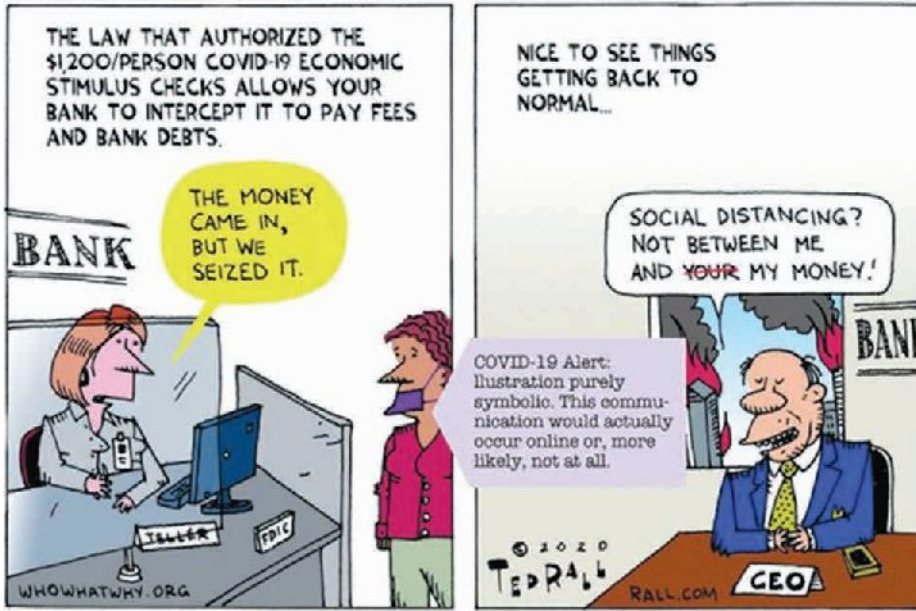
When the coronavirus pandemic struck, the public health system was functioning at a minimal level. Cutbacks in health care services accelerated after the 2008 Great Recession and the giant bank bailout. Under the slogan “Repeal and Replace Obamacare,” the cutbacks became more severe under Donald Trump. The system was not prepared or able to respond to the pandemic.

Without an adequate public health care system, the only possible response left to contain the contagion was social distancing and self-isolation: a shutdown. That shutdown has exposed that workers are essential. Life would grind to a halt without them.

The shutdown has also exposed some who aren’t essential. For example, a Wall Street hedge fund billionaire hiding out on a yacht doesn’t do anything we find to be essential. Completely nonessential, in fact.

Karl Marx, writing about the value of labor, said, “Every child knows that any nation that stopped working, not for a year, but let us say, just for a few weeks, would perish.”

Yes, today there has been a general shutdown of all businesses and everyone told to stay secluded at home. But there is an exception and that is for so-called essential workers. That includes not just health care workers, but also anyone producing food as well as transportation, electrical



power and other services. Labor is essential or we would perish.

Of course, Marx also showed that labor power is the source of capitalist profits.

Workers are essential, so why aren’t we being protected?

Benefits system overwhelmed

With the shutdown came mass layoffs and furloughs. As of April 23, more than 26 million workers have lost their jobs in just the last four weeks.

The unemployment benefits system is overwhelmed. Many unemployment offices are not open to the public. Phone systems are overloaded and understaffed. State unemployment websites are no better, if you even have a computer with broadband access at home. (A study by Microsoft in 2018 estimated that about half the U.S. population — 163 million — have no high-speed internet service at home).

Jobless, no paycheck, unemployment benefits unreachable. What has been the government’s response?

When the most urgent need was to protect jobs, pay unemployment benefits to anyone without a job,

halt evictions and foreclosures, and suspend all rent and mortgage payments, Trump and Congress passed a “stimulus” package that was mostly a giveaway to the Wall Street banks and financiers. About \$454 billion was given directly to the Federal Reserve Bank. Another \$340 billion went to small business loans. Some \$250 billion went to unemployment insurance and a one-time payment to all adult taxpayers.

The one-time \$1,200 check was not enough to carry anyone through a three-month shutdown. But even that was tied into the banks, who are able to claim any or all of the \$1,200 for so-called debt payment. The \$1,200 payments have been made only to those who have a bank account registered with the IRS.

The Paycheck Protection Program small business loans are supposed to be forgivable if the small businesses maintain current employee and compensation levels. But first, the program was set up in a way that encouraged businesses to lay off workers before applying for the loan.

The loan program was riddled with backdoors and loopholes, and the level of corruption was stagger-

ing. The \$340 billion program ran out of money in just 13 days. The loans, which were supposed to go only to businesses with less than 500 employees, mostly went to larger ones because of the way the law was written.

One big loophole is the legal shell game called franchises. Giant corporations often operate through local outlets that are set up as franchises in order to evade laws and regulations. McDonald’s, for example, has used the franchise game to block labor unions and avoid enforcement of federal labor laws.

All the loans went through the big banks, which were paid hefty fees. And the banks made sure to maximize the fees they collected, even though it was not their money being loaned and they took absolutely no risk.

According to a suit filed by a group of small businesses in California, four of the biggest Wall Street banks — Bank of America, Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase and US Bank — unfairly prioritized emergency loan requests from large customers to earn fatter fees. Each bank “prioritized corporate greed at the expense of its small business customers,” the suit says.

The small business loans turned out to be another giveaway to the big banks.

So far, Trump and Congress have been heavy on giving funds to the rich, big businesses and the banks. It’s time to put an end to that and put the money and resources where they are most needed. Stop the layoffs, fund unemployment benefits for all who are jobless, halt evictions and foreclosures, and make sure that there is access to food for all.

It is time to declare that a job is a right. Housing is a right. Health care is a right. Education is a right. 📌

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: Free prisoners from these death cells!

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On March 20, the bureau’s website reported just two Covid-19-positive inmates and staff; two weeks later, it reported 174 confirmed cases. **That’s an increase of 8,600 percent** [my emphasis – jp], a much steeper rate of increase than has been recorded among the general population. And because testing has been grossly insufficient, these numbers are almost certainly an undercount.”

Refuting the argument that prisoners would be better off staying in prison, they argue that not only is this a death sentence for the incarcerated, but the ramifications of incubating the virus in this huge population will adversely affect the general population, far more than if the number of prisoners was drastically reduced.

Freeland, Patton and Sands go on to mention the obstruction to releasing prisoners by prosecutors, judges and Barr himself:

“It is too late for the crisis to be entirely averted, but the worst can be

prevented if Congress and Attorney General William P. Barr act with urgency. So far, however, Barr and federal prosecutors have opposed even modest efforts to reduce the prison population. In courtrooms across the country, when lawyers seek bail or compassionate release for vulnerable people accused or convicted of nonviolent offenses, federal prosecutors have vigorously opposed the requests — even in cases where people’s sentences are near completion. In nearly every case, prosecutors are making the same argument that Barr advanced in a recent statement: that inmates are safer in prison than they would be at home.

“It is an absurd claim, contradicted by science and fact. The CDC’s guidance is unequivocal: social distancing, hand-washing and cleanliness are key to reducing spread of the coronavirus. Numerous credible public health experts have observed that overcrowded prisons with communal living; shared toilets, showers, and sinks; poor sanitation; and wholly inadequate medical

care would allow Covid-19 to sweep through the prison population far more quickly than the general public — with devastating consequences.”

Free them all!

According to public defenders, Barr has the authority to do what is necessary with the additional powers given to him by the passage of the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) in March.

The solution of the problem does not require rocket science or resources that the U.S. lacks. However, this capitalist government and politicians bought and paid for by the monopolies would rather commit mass murder in the prisons than use the trillions of dollars earmarked for the military or to bail out Big Business.

Iran has already released over 85,000 prisoners to save them from the virus. Instead of following Iran’s example, the U.S. continues to enforce sanctions that greatly limit the Iranian government’s ability to deal with the pandemic. U.S. sanctions

apply to Cuba, Zimbabwe, Venezuela and many other countries trying to deal with this crisis. In the case of Cuba, Venezuela and China, these countries are also actively engaged in assisting many other countries in combating this threat to humanity.

There’s not much to figure out here. Of course, housing, health care and other facilities to house those who are a danger to themselves or others will have to be provided to those who are released. The U.S. has the resources and ability to do that — if only profits were not priority number one.

The details of care for released prisoners cannot be used as an excuse today to delay or refuse their release, which amounts to practicing genocide against our human family members who are now being further tortured and falling as casualties in the war on working-class, poor and oppressed people here in the belly of the beast.

It will take a united and militant movement to change this deadly direction of inaction. 📌

Coronavirus central in Queens, N.Y.

By Stephen Millies

As of April 25, some 9,925 people in five adjoining zip codes in the Queens borough of New York City have the coronavirus. About 350,000 people live there. One out of 38 has the virus.

This writer lives in one of these zip codes, 11372, the Jackson Heights neighborhood. Within its 475 acres are 1,935 people who've tested positive for Covid-19.

People line up, sometimes for an hour, to enter supermarkets and drugstores. They wear masks or other face coverings and try to stand six feet apart.

I can't recall seeing anyone wearing a Trump hat. Some "essential" stores, like bodegas and even Dunkin Donuts franchises, have closed because the owners are worried about catching the virus.

Just about every Chinese restaurant has shut down, even for take-out and delivery orders. Was this due to health concerns or because of the danger of racist attacks fueled by Trump and Fox News?

The 545-bed Elmhurst Hospital is the closest hospital for almost all of the third of a million people who live in these five zip codes. Refrigerator trucks there hold the dead. A line of people wraps around the building to get tested.

In the richest city on earth, there are less than two hospital beds per thousand people in the borough of Queens with its 2.3 million people.

Despite the vicious U.S. economic blockade of socialist Cuba, that country has almost three times as many beds per person.

Overcrowded housing = death

Next to Jackson Heights is the Corona neighborhood where Louis Armstrong lived. Its 11368 zip code has 3,211 cases of Covid-19, the most of any zip code in New York City.

A block from Armstrong's house, Manuel "Manny" Mayi was beaten to death by a white racist mob with baseball bats and a fire extinguisher on March 29, 1991. None of the lynchers of the 18-year-old Dominican honor student were even indicted.

Across Northern Boulevard from Corona is East Elmhurst, zip code 11369, which has 1,191 cases. Malcolm X and his family lived in East Elmhurst at 23-11 97th Street.

Northern Boulevard is still a death strip for pedestrians attempting to cross. The local chapter of the Black Panther Party helped lead a struggle to get stop lights installed on this busy thoroughfare.

Elmhurst, zip code 11373, has 2,474 people who've tested positive for the coronavirus. Zip code 11370, which includes the Rikers Island jail complex, has 1,114 cases.

New York City is a densely populated metropolis. But the reason this seven-square-mile area in Queens has so many people who are ill is because of overcrowding.

The five zip codes have an average of over 48,000 people per square mile. That's high and may seem to be unbelievably so to most people living in the U.S.

But there are some pretty ritzy Manhattan neighborhoods that are even more dense. A lot of people can fit comfortably in a luxury high-rise.

Manhattan, of course, has many neighborhoods with poor and working people, including Harlem, El Barrio (East Harlem), Washington Heights, Loisaida (the Lower East Side) and Chinatown.

Black and Latinx communities in the Bronx and Brooklyn have also been hard hit.

What sets neighborhoods like Corona and Elmhurst apart is the number of families and individuals who are forced to live in just a few rooms or just one room.

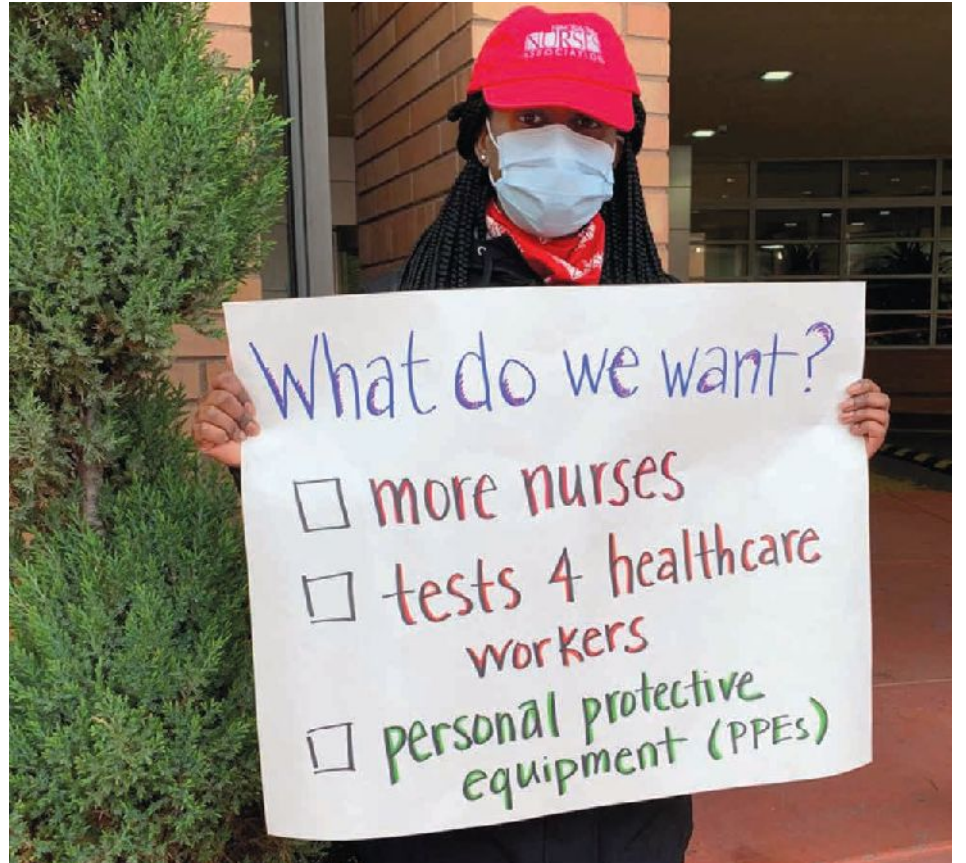
These are largely immigrant communities with people from all over the planet. From the notices taped, sometimes one on top of another, on almost every light pole, the cheapest monthly rent for a single room is \$600. That's with a shared bathroom.

The least expensive one-bedroom apartment might be \$1,400. That is a big increase from 2011, when \$1,100 was the going rate for renting a one-bedroom apartment.

Meanwhile, there are at least 200,000 apartments in New York City that landlords keep empty in order to maintain high rents.

It isn't just overcrowding that helps transmit the virus. Many of the people living here are considered to be "essential workers" and have to continue to go to work.

Seventy New York City transit workers have already died from the coronavirus. The Number 7 train that goes through Corona, Elmhurst and Jackson Heights continues to



Nurses protest at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center near Brooklyn/Queens border on April 10.

take thousands of hospital and supermarket workers to their jobs.

Trump spits on these workers, many of whom are Asian, Black, Latinx and immigrants.

Inequality spurring reaction

If the entire U.S. had the same infection rate as these zip codes in Queens, it would have 9 million cases of Covid-19. Thirty-two states have fewer cases than this slice of Queens.

The fascist organizers of the white mobs protesting in Lansing, Mich., and other state capitals to "Reopen America" are taking advantage of this unevenness.

New York City isn't the only place that's been devastated by the pandemic. Seven thousand people have died in nursing homes.

Thousands of meatpacking and poultry workers across the country have fallen ill. So have incarcerated workers at Chicago's Cook County jail and hundreds of other prisons.

Covid-19 has swept through Black communities in Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans. Over a thousand members of the Navajo Nation have the virus. Forty-one have died.

Trump supporters use the concentration of deaths among Black, Indigenous and Latinx peoples to

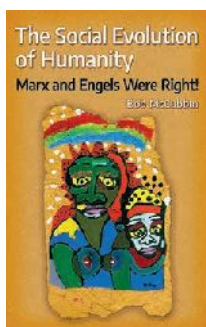
spread the lying message that it's just a disease for "them." Forty percent of Michigan's deaths from the disease are of African Americans while only 14 percent of the state's population are Black.

The reactionary rallies against the necessary public health measures needed to contain the virus are not grassroots efforts. These astroturf events are funded by billionaires like Michigan's DeVos family. They're attempts to divert attention from the wholesale failure of the capitalist state to protect people against pandemics.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem is one of those who wants to lift the health restrictions. She ignores over 500 workers, largely immigrants, who have fallen ill at the Smithfield Foods pork plant in Sioux Falls.

Not all white workers believe the garbage spewed out by Trump and Fox News. The tragic progression of the coronavirus, spreading to largely white suburbs and rural areas, will challenge the belief that it's just an inner city problem.

Nurses and their unions will serve as a political connecting rod between the oppressed communities and many of the segregated white neighborhoods. The people united will defeat the Trump virus. 🍌



Paperback or Kindle? <https://tinyurl.com/vwarcv7>

The Social Evolution of Humanity Marx and Engels were right!

by Bob McCubbin

This study of the evolution of humanity focuses on human social/sexual relations and, in particular, the changing social status of women. It offers a selection of scientific evidence that updates and augments the viewpoint expressed in Frederick Engels' masterful work, 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.'

McCubbin is the author of 'Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.' Published in 1976, during the first flush of the modern LGBTQ2S movement, McCubbin's unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of how LGBTQ2S oppression developed.

A NEW BOOK <https://tinyurl.com/vn3qvn5>

BLACK AUGUST 1619-2019

commemorates 400 years of Black freedom struggle in North America. This book examines the construction of a racial capitalist venture — slavery — where the histories of African, Native and working people overlapped.

Black August celebrates legacy and accomplishments of Black women.

► The book is dedicated to Black, Brown, oppressed, and poor people who have been imprisoned and killed by the U.S. criminal justice system.

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• Carl Muhammad • Zola Fish • Mary Lou Finley • Dennis Childs • Eusi Kwayana

• Mumia Abu-Jamal • Curtis Howard • Poem by Sylvia Cameron Telafaro



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As Sanders ends campaign, ‘Don’t mourn, organize’ Build a movement to fight for socialism!

By Sharon Black

On April 8, Sen. Bernie Sanders suspended his presidential campaign. More recently, in a move that was widely expected, Sanders endorsed Joe Biden as the presumed Democratic nominee. While this moment is very painful for Sanders’ campaign supporters, it’s important to examine the larger developments to determine which way the movement should go next.

Let’s recognize the Sanders campaign, not for what didn’t happen, but for what it did accomplish. It was unprecedented in bringing the issues of health care and education as human rights into the mainstream; and it began to open the discussion on socialism. It tackled issues like mass incarceration and the climate crisis. It energized a large, multinational, working-class movement of mostly young people who are fed up with the status quo.

No one should forget that the Democratic Party establishment connived, conspired and worked overtime to undermine the Sanders campaign, along with the big business media and every conceivable mouthpiece for the bankers and capitalists. The idea that workers are entitled to even the most basic rights like health care, food, a job, a home or even the right to live was considered heretical.

What these agents for the billionaires and bankers feared was not so much Sanders the candidate, but rather the campaign’s potential for raising working-class expectations — expectations that could have gone beyond the narrow confines of the electoral arena.

Several months ago, we took the position of critically supporting the Sanders campaign, not based on the candidate, with whom we certainly have differences, especially on imperialist foreign policy, but based on supporting the working-class movement, especially younger workers, whose aspirations found expression in this electoral arena.

Question is: what’s the next step?

“There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks when decades happen.” These words, attributed to V.I. Lenin, the architect of the Russian Revolution, aptly describe the upheaval the world is experiencing during the coronavirus pandemic, the changes that have already taken place and those that are still to come.

The capitalist economic downturn, precipitated by the overproduction of oil and gas, percolating prior to the coronavirus pandemic, is now in full swing. It is a crisis that is global in character, and when the coronavirus pandemic eases, it will be all the more apparent.

Over 22 million people in the U.S. are newly unemployed. The inability of capitalism to provide even the most basic measures for public health has been exposed to the entire world. In the so-called richest country in the world, health care workers are not provided personal protective equipment (PPE). Testing kits are few and far between.



People wait in their cars for the San Antonio Food Bank to begin food distribution, April 9.

It is the unplanned anarchy of the so-called free market as much as any government policy that is overwhelmingly responsible for the lack of necessary equipment. It was the closing of hospitals because they were considered insufficiently profitable that has resulted in doctors and nurses having to make unthinkable choices as beds and ventilators run out.

The staggeringly disproportionate rate of deaths and the resultant suffering in Black, Brown and other oppressed communities has shown once again the brutal, white supremacist nature of capitalism. Millions of poor and oppressed people locked in prisons and detention camps are facing a virtual death sentence.

Hunger is sweeping the country. In both cities and rural areas, it is becoming increasingly hard for people to afford or obtain food. On April 9, some 10,000 families in San Antonio, Texas, lined up for food.

Revolutionary socialists have found themselves in a completely changed situation, dealing with stay-at-home orders that prevent mass demonstrations, but at the same time rising working-class consciousness and anger at capitalist failures.

It has also changed the electoral arena in a way that weighed against the Sanders campaign, and perhaps most electoral campaigns, at least for now. It is hard and perhaps foolhardy to predict what this will mean for November’s election.

This was fully demonstrated in Wisconsin’s April 7 primary, when voters were forced to go to the polls, risking health and safety. In a brutally cynical move, in-person elections in Wisconsin were ordered to go ahead. In Milwaukee, which has the state’s largest population of Black and Latinx people, only five polling sites out of 180 were open.

Exploiting fear and instability

The Democratic Party has been conducting a campaign to exploit fear, fostering the slogan of “return to normalcy” and fueling the argument that Sanders was unelectable and too radical. Its message is aimed at suffocating the entire workers’ movement.

Younger activists have roundly rejected this. In a #YouthVote Letter to Joe Biden penned by a number of groups, including the Sunrise Movement, the signers explained that normalcy meant going back to “endless war, skyrocketing inequality, crushing student loan debt, mass deportations, police murders of Black Americans and mass incarceration.”

If there is one urgent message to the movement at this juncture, it is

this: not to be squelched, muffled or herded into the Biden campaign — a path that is as deadly as the virus.

If the movement disbands or follows the Democratic Party establishment, it will become disarmed in the face of bigger crises that cannot be addressed or resolved by the capitalist electoral parties.

Recent events in Lansing, Mich., and other state capitals illustrate the dangerous side of the equation. Hundreds of rowdy, right-wing extremists, waving flags (including the confederate flag of slavery), toting guns and posturing for Donald Trump, marched on the Michigan Capitol calling for an end to stay-at-home orders. Similar protests took place in Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia, and more are planned.

There is a deeply racist and anti-working class character to these protests that should not be ignored. The fact that Michigan is home to Detroit, a majority Black city which has suffered a disproportionate number of Covid-19 deaths, should not be lost on anyone.

It will take a vibrant, independent and militant working-class movement to answer the right-wing threat; and more importantly, to take us in a brand new direction if we are to save not only ourselves but the planet.

Sanders’ role as the head of this movement has reached an impasse. The next step calls for shifting the struggle away from the Democratic Party straightjacket and fighting for working-class power.

We should remind ourselves how deeply undemocratic the U.S. electoral system is. In other countries, even capitalist ones, the Sanders movement would have had proportional representation.

There are millions of people who cannot even vote, including immigrant workers — documented and undocumented — whose superexploited labor superizes capitalist profits. Black, Brown and poor prisoners populating the ever-growing, for-profit, prison-industrial complex are stripped of voting rights. Add the overpowering influence of billionaires and fraud aimed at depriving the oppressed of their voting rights, and you get a system that is rigged from top to bottom.

Capitalism has no solutions

The capitalist system by definition depends on exploiting labor. It must expand for its very survival. There is a deep contradiction between this need and the health needs of the world’s people. Donald Trump may be the crude and at times ludicrous spokesperson for this compulsion to get the capitalist economy running, but bigger systemic forces are driving it.

Regardless of whether it is prudent or safe, there will be a push to get workers back on the job — not because there isn’t already accumulated wealth within our society that can feed and support every human being while they shelter in place, but because the present system cannot prioritize human needs.

Capitalists are awash in money, whether it’s sheltered in offshore bank accounts or possessions because it currently can’t be profitably invested, or channeled into the Pentagon death machine.

The idea of a guaranteed national income no longer seems so radical given the changed circumstances of everyone’s lives, which will likely last far longer than the coronavirus pandemic. If anything, the capitalist crisis will tend toward the expansion of the exploitative gig economy, continued high unemployment, and intensification of the globalization of low-wage work.

At this moment, there are dozens of halfway emergency measures, such as temporarily halting some evictions, mortgage foreclosures and utility shutoffs. They are sporadic and vary by state and city. But what happens when they are lifted?

We’ve already seen workers’ actions and strikes all across the country, from Amazon to McDonald’s, at hospitals and groceries, by delivery drivers, transportation and postal workers. The lack of regard and planning to defend workers’ lives has fueled workers’ solidarity.

May Day & Democratic Convention

May Day — International Workers’ Day — is just around the corner. Co-operation Jackson, based in Jackson, Miss., and many other groups have been agitating for a general strike on May 1. The Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles are actively organizing in both the community and at workplaces.

We urge the entire movement to embrace these calls and to organize and promote “No work! No shopping! No rent!” on May Day.

The Democratic Party Convention has been rescheduled from July to the week of Aug. 17 in Milwaukee. So have the planned protests. We have endorsed the Coalition to March on the DNC and are calling on the largest number of people to participate.

Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido are planning caravans from the West Coast, East Coast, the South, Southwest and Midwest. We urge the Sanders movement, particularly the youth, to join with the protests at the DNC.

Danger of imperialist war

There is an ever-present danger of imperialist war — but that danger is multiplied during a capitalist economic crisis. Any widening of war will intensify racism, jingoism, anti-immigrant violence, misogyny and bigotry against LGBTQ2S people. The Democratic Party, with few exceptions, is a party of war like the Republican Party. It cannot offer a solution.

The pandemic has revealed that global cooperation and solidarity is a necessity for everyone’s survival. But instead, the U.S. rulers and the Pentagon continue to inflict sanctions on countless countries, including Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Yemen and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. These sanctions

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What Lenin can teach us about this historic moment

By Greg Butterfield

For a major anniversary like the 150th birthday of V.I. Lenin on April 22, 2020, it's tempting to try and write some overarching summary of his enormous revolutionary contributions: building a revolutionary party, imperialism and national oppression, the state and revolution, the construction of a socialist society, and more.

But what is it that we most need from Lenin right now — amidst a global pandemic, rapid economic and climate collapse, fascist demonstrations encouraged by a sitting U.S. president, the precipitous end of the Bernie Sanders election campaign?

Today, the validity of Lenin's revolutionary outlook is confirmed by the success of countries with revolutionary socialist foundations like Cuba, Vietnam and China in combating the coronavirus pandemic among their own populations, and sending internationalist medical support around the world. This, even

after long decades of setbacks to the socialist camp and the world revolutionary process have forced these countries to take backward steps in order to survive.

This can't help but open the eyes of many working-class and oppressed people to the alternative that Lenin's revolutionary socialism represents to decaying world capitalism.

"The name of Lenin is a kind of synonym for revolutionary class struggle. The failure to agree on that is, in reality, a line of demarcation between communism and social democracy, with its various hues." So said Sam Marcy, an accomplished student of Lenin and the Russian Revolution, at an international communist conference in Belgium in 1994.

Marcy's co-thinker and fellow organizer Vince Copeland (writing under the pen name David Grey) noted: "Lenin's leadership, contrary to the theses of his enemies and detractors, was not primarily in the force of his personality and the acquisition of 'power,' but in the educating

of a party of revolutionaries with the understanding of the Russian and world revolution and in the nature of the struggle dictated by this understanding.

"While he had unusual talents and was much more intense about his objectives than most — if not all — of his contemporaries, everything about him was rational and understandable and therefore the revolutionaries of today have the possibility of learning just how he did it in his time as in a handbook, if not a blueprint, for doing it themselves in their time."

Rich and varied experience

Perhaps the most important thing Lenin has to teach us right now is that new social and economic conditions — including abrupt and dramatic changes like those we are living through — offer revolutionaries new challenges and new opportunities to advance the struggle for socialism.

In his book "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder," written in 1920 to help educate the international communist movement on the lessons of the Russian Revolution, Lenin described "The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism": the years of preparation for revolution (1903–1905), the years of revolution (1905–1907), the years of reaction (1907–1910), the years of revival (1910–1914), the First Imperialist World War (1914–1917), the second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917), and the third, triumphant socialist revolution (October to November 1917).

Each of these periods offered unique experiences and challenges to the revolutionaries and their party (the Bolsheviks, as the communists in Russia were known), from setting up a newspaper and participating in bourgeois elections to street protests and armed struggle. Each required different tactics and strategies to educate and mobilize the workers and oppressed to fight for their own interests against the exploiting ruling class and its repressive state.

Without this rich and varied experience, Lenin explained, without these ups and downs in the struggle, filtered through an organized, disciplined, revolutionary party guided by a Marxist world outlook, the victory of the revolution in October–November 1917 and the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union would not have been possible.

Lenin continued: "The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the 'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph.

"This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for



a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses — hitherto apathetic — who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it."

The tasks ahead

It's obvious from the above that some of these revolutionary prerequisites already exist in the U.S. today, while the potential exists for the others to develop — perhaps very quickly.

There is an unprecedented national and global capitalist crisis. It wasn't created by the coronavirus; but the pandemic acted as a catalyst, accelerating the inevitable collapse created by worldwide capitalist overproduction and exposing the hollowness of the U.S. economy in particular. As a result, workers in the U.S. and across the earth face a painful, prolonged period of misery and dislocation.

The governing bodies of the capitalist state are in crisis and conflict, while millions of workers who avoided politics in the past, especially youth, recently supported the reformist-socialist presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders, and are now expressing the feeling that things cannot go on in the old way.

Yet there is much work to be done in uniting existing revolutionary socialists and communists, scattered by the historic setbacks of the 1980s and 1990s and by old ideological disputes, and training a new generation of revolutionaries to take advantage of the opportunities that are rapidly developing.

At that 1994 communist gathering in Belgium, Sam Marcy said: "The need is for all revolutionary communists to unite on the basis of a common struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression. It is not necessary for any grouping to abandon its propaganda in support of the views of individual leaders.

"What is needed is the broadest united front of revolutionary communist groupings, as long as they adhere to the spirit of revolutionary class struggle as generally promoted by Lenin in his writings on admission to the Communist International."

This task has perhaps never been more urgent than it is today. 📌

MAY DAY Strike, don't die for Trump & capitalism!

Continued from page 1

tention centers, among the worst incubators for disease.

On May Day 2020, there is a new symbol of hope and renewal of the class struggle: health care workers in masks and scrubs facing down armed white-supremacist mobs calling to "reopen the economy" on behalf of the bosses, from Denver to Harrisburg, Pa., and Phoenix. Wherever possible, class-conscious workers should join these heroic health care workers' anti-fascist counteractions, while exercising all necessary precautions to protect the safety of our families, communities and co-workers.

Trump and Wall Street, under the slogan of "open it up," are manipulating small business owners and utilizing white supremacist and fascist groups to drive workers back to unsafe conditions, threatening the well-being of entire communities.

This is a textbook example of how capitalism uses fascist movements, built on the backs of small businesses and the middle class, against the workers in periods of deep crisis. Small business owners need to see the hypocrisy involved in these maneuvers. The big banks and billionaires have siphoned off billions of dollars in aid. The bipartisan "stimulus plan" is aimed not at helping mom-and-pop businesses, or for that matter workers, but rather bailing out the super rich.

Capitalism exposed

But the rottenness of capitalism is exposed as never before. The wealthiest country on earth has proven unable to provide even the bare minimum of public health and relief to the masses. Meanwhile, the most essential workers for the life and health of the population are shown to be among the lowest paid and most oppressed, disproportionately Black, Latinx, Arab, Indigenous and Asian, women and LGBTQ2S, and migrants.

We demand that the grotesque Pentagon war budget and Big Business profits be seized to provide a guaranteed income, health care and housing for all — including immigrants, regardless of legal status! We need to cancel rent, mortgage and debt payments! No evictions or utility shut-offs. Water and food are rights for all.

Our movement must fight against all forms of racism, including the anti-China propaganda that has led to violence against Asian people. We must fight to release those locked in jails and detention camps and oppose the disproportionate number of deaths in Black, Brown and poor communities. All deportations and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) proceedings must be stopped.

The government tosses us crumbs because we don't own the means of production that have been created with our labor. It's time for the workers and oppressed to take the reins of society in our own hands and reorganize it from top to bottom based on people's needs, not profits. While revolutionaries and socialists have utilized bourgeois elections as an arena of struggle, history has shown us that it takes a mass workers' movement, prepared to resist and fight for power and liberation.

Capitalism can't be reformed to meet the enormous challenge of economic crisis, climate collapse and pandemic. No, it's up to us to organize ourselves and build a movement to fight for political power through mass mobilization, workplace organizing and other avenues of struggle — a truly revolutionary movement for socialism.

In 1989, Cuban President Fidel Castro declared, "Socialism or death!" It was true then for Cuba, and it is true now for the workers of the whole planet. Let's put capitalism where it belongs at last: in the trash bin of history! 📌

From AIDS to Covid-19

By Lizz Toledo

From a presentation at the online press conference, “Fighting Racism During the Coronavirus Crisis,” on April 4, 2020.

In 1981, a mysterious illness began to appear in the gay community. One of the first and most noticeable symptoms was Kaposi’s Sarcoma (KC), which created purplish lesions on the skin of the afflicted.

Because the first people diagnosed with the syndrome were gay men, many in the ruling class started calling it “Gay Cancer.” It wasn’t until the latter part of 1982 that leaders and the media stopped calling it this. But the next name chosen was just as bad and even more stigmatizing to the sufferers: gay-related immunodeficiency syndrome (GRID).

In addition to KC, a cluster of gay men in Southern California and New York City were also getting sick with pneumocystis pneumonia. This led to the diagnosis of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Today many researchers believe that KC and AIDS were and are two separate epidemics.

The attitude of the government, including then-President Ronald Reagan, was that the affected appeared to be only gay men and intravenous drug users — people who didn’t deserve any special attention, much less support. It wasn’t until hemophiliacs developed PCP pneumonia and other opportunistic infections that the government suddenly felt it should respond.

We must never forget Reagan’s shameful legacy, the lack of leadership he showed in the fight against AIDS. Reagan is to blame for the thousands who died and continue to die as a result of his cowardice, his fear of the powerful religious right and the “immoral majority,” who gave Reagan his road to the White House.

These included the misogynist Rev. Jerry Falwell, who used AIDS as the tool and gay men as the target for the politics of fear, hate and discrimination. Falwell said, “AIDS is the wrath of god upon homosexuals.” And Reagan’s communications director Patrick Buchanan stated that AIDS was “nature’s revenge on gay men.”

On May 31, 1987, as his second term was coming to an end, Reagan finally spoke on the issue of the day. But not before 36,058 people in the U.S. had been diagnosed with AIDS and 20,849 had died.

Although the Centers for Disease Control reported that HIV could not be transmitted by casual contact and Reagan knew this, he continued to fan irrational fear by saying: “And yet medicine has not come forth unequivocally and said, ‘This we know for a fact, that it is safe.’ And until they do, I think we just have to do the best we can with this problem. I can understand both sides of it.” By both sides he meant parents who were demanding that children with AIDS be kicked out of their schools — including kindergarteners.

That is what I remember Reagan for, wiping out a whole generation of gay men, many of whom were my dear friends! When I visit a gay bar



PHOTO BY RICKY FLORES

AIDS activists protest Reagan administration neglect.

today, I’m struck by the lack of gay men my age. Most are in their twenties, thirties, some in their forties, or in their seventies. Very few are in their fifties or sixties. A whole generation is gone due to Reagan’s unequivocal indifference towards the lives of the poor and the oppressed.


It was the activists and freedom fighters of the 1980s and 1990s and even today that made the U.S. government provide housing, health care, financial assistance, needle exchange, treatment and many of the services that people with AIDS have today, though it is still far from sufficient. The fight is not over.

Today we see much the same murderous response from the ruling class and all its cronies to Covid-19. They show the same callousness towards all of us that they did to people with AIDS. Some on the right want to blame Covid-19 on the so-called “acceptance” of the gay community. Racist 45 started calling it the “Chinese virus” and condoned violence against

our Chinese and other Asian siblings.

We can’t depend on them. We have to stand up for each other, especially the most oppressed, the prisoners, the homeless, the poor, the immigrants, including those being held in concentration camps, and for the working class in general.

We will not die for Wall Street! We demand:

- Freedom for all prisoners, including political prisoners;
- Provision of a healthy, safe place for released prisoners;
- Release of immigrants from all concentration camps;
- Unemployment insurance or income for all workers;
- Health care for all;
- Increase in food stamps;
- Increase in Social Security Insurance benefits and for the disabled;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for all workers required to stay on the job;
- Paid medical leave for all. 

Cuba’s victory at Bay of Pigs made medical solidarity possible

By Miranda Etel

Fifty-nine years ago, on April 17, 1961, Cuba defeated a U.S.-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón). The invasion’s purpose was to destroy the Cuban Revolution. The CIA armed, trained and transported the right-wing Cuban force to Playa Girón. Because of the Cubans’ strong political will and powerful leadership, the U.S. effort suffered a massive defeat. Fidel himself directed the military and worked alongside Cuban combatants to protect the Revolution.

I visited Playa Girón in 2019. While there, I learned that the U.S. supplied an advanced and deadly arsenal of weapons for the invasion. At the historical museum, a worker pointed out a Fortune 500 corporation’s logo on a U.S. artillery piece. Imperialist war lines the pockets of all big business.

The accomplishments of the Cuban government and people should not be understated. The revolutionary leadership of Cuba drastically reduced illiteracy, homelessness and joblessness in less than a decade. Cuba nationalized all U.S. properties on the island in 1960 to provide for its people. Fidel initiated the Latin America School of Medicine (ELAM), which has trained doctors from all over the world.

Cuba has sent medical brigades

to at least 59 countries to fight disease and poverty worldwide. There may be no better example of heroic medical internationalism than Cuba’s. Every person in Cuba receives free medical care for their entire life. Despite the brutal U.S. blockade that prevents Cuba from trading with many foreign partners, the island has made important contributions to global health care.

Right now, Covid-19 is ravaging Black, Brown and Indigenous communities across the United States. Meanwhile the U.S. government refuses to protect the people and instead prioritizes bailing out massive corporations. The wealthy have near-unlimited access to testing and other health care resources. All the while, tens of thousands of working-class people with symptoms cannot get access to testing or proper care.

While the U.S. is letting its people die and spreading racist myths about China’s response to Covid-19, Cuba has made heroic efforts to fight the virus all around the world. The Cuban government has dispatched medical brigades to more than 37 countries to fight Covid-19. During the pandemic’s peak in Italy, Cuban doctors arrived on the scene immediately.

Over 40 countries have requested use of an antiviral drug that Cuba has been using to treat Covid-19. Cuban




Cuban medical brigade departs for Angola April 9 to fight Covid-19.

PHOTO: RADIO HAVANA CUBA

doctors developed the drug, interferon alfa-2b, working with a Texas doctor in 1981. Combined with other antivirals, alfa-2b has proven to be an effective treatment when given at the beginning of an infection and as a prevention method. Both China and Cuba have been using it to fight the virus, and it is produced by a joint Cuban-Chinese venture, Changheber. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration should immediately approve distribution of alfa-2b in the U.S. to save peoples’ lives during this crisis.

Fifty-nine years after the revolutionary victory at the Bay of Pigs, U.S. aggression toward Cuba continues. The U.S. has relentlessly tried to destroy socialism and progress in Cuba. Yet Cuba continues to prioritize improving the lives of its people and of people around the world.

There is no better example of this than Cuba’s heroic efforts during the Covid-19 crisis. It’s time to end the blockade on Cuba and start using interferon alfa-2b in the U.S. to save peoples’ lives. 

Build a movement for socialism!

Continued from page 4

have prevented badly needed supplies to fight the coronavirus from reaching these countries.

Bernie Sanders is not a revolutionary. But as an insider, he understood the power of the billionaires, and that to realize even a part of his program, it would take a mass movement in the streets, one that included mass resistance in workplaces and communities.

It’s time we take the torch and build a movement that can move all of humanity forward toward socialism, not backward toward the corrupt capitalist system. We will make mistakes along the way, but we must embark on that road, sooner rather than later. ¡Sí, se puede!

Sharon Black is a national spokesperson for the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido.

What will it take to halt climate change? Socialism!

By David Card

Among the greatest threats to the people of the world today and our ability for future prosperity is the threat of human-caused climate change, including global warming. In the capitalist world, many in the media, political and business establishment call the concept a hoax because they economically benefit from the industries that are making the planet unlivable for human beings.

Yet in every socialist country, the ruling parties believe in the science of climate change and are taking steps to prevent it. In fact, the socialist countries are doing more to prevent it than many capitalist countries with far greater resources. Their systems of public ownership and planning are what give them the power to do it.

First, what is climate change? What causes it? And why is capitalism so bad at preventing it? What is referred to as “climate change” is the alternation of the planet’s climate caused by human activity. The main mechanism that causes this is the burning of fossil fuels, which release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that traps the sun’s heat in the atmosphere and warms the planet.

At the dawn of the industrial revolution, the water power of rivers was used to supply energy to the new factories spinning cloth in England. But before long, steam engines that burned coal replaced the rivers as the primary source of energy. Eventually, electricity was discovered, but the primary source of energy to make electricity was still coal, a very dirty and polluting form of energy, and it remains one of the largest sources of energy, today augmented by oil and natural gas.

Due to hundreds of years of infrastructure and development, coal and other fossil fuels are at the center of so much of the industrialized world and represent some of the cheapest forms of energy, despite their continued use spelling doom for human civilization. Because capitalism is only concerned with profit, using the cheapest method will always be chosen over anything else, and the future of the planet or welfare of the workers is of no concern for the owners of capital.

The economies of socialist societies, however, are based on planning and public ownership rather than private control by a small wealthy class. These societies can make strategic investments that prioritize other goals rather than the immediate maximization of profit, and preserving the environment and preventing climate change is one of these goals.

China turns to renewable energy

Despite having the largest share of total carbon emissions as a country, the People’s Republic of China has a per capita emissions rate that is half that of the United States, while having a greater gross domestic product when adjusted for local purchasing power. During the first decade of the 2000s, the Communist Party of China made fighting pollution a national policy goal. To this end, China poured vast sums of money and national resources into several critical areas of clean energy.

The solar panel and wind turbine

markets used to be relatively small and products were expensive, but China invested billions of dollars into massive facilities for the production of solar panels and wind turbines. Within a few years, the costs of these products fell tremendously, with solar panel costs falling as much as 80 percent. These investments were made for the strategic reason of fighting climate change, and they go beyond the capitalist logic of maximizing profits. The state purposefully ramped up production in order to fulfill a human need.

China has also been the nation leading the world in deployment of new nuclear power plants, a form of energy that produces no carbon pollution. According to the World Nuclear Association, China has 47 plants currently in operation, 12 under construction and 168 in the planning stages. These new power plants are of modern designs quite different from those in the United States, mostly built in the 1970s.

They incorporate many passive safety features to prevent meltdowns such as those that occurred at Chernobyl and Fukushima, requiring no human intervention to prevent disaster. Some reactors in the research stages are even proposed to run on alternative fuels such as thorium and be cooled by liquid metals like sodium instead of water, offering further increased efficiency and safety.

Nuclear power has been shunned by most countries of the capitalist West for decades. The high upfront costs represent too high of a risk to the private monopoly banks of Wall Street despite their high lifetime output and lack of carbon emissions. A powerful and righteous anti-nuclear movement rebelled against dangerous capitalist abuses of nuclear energy and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Socialist China, however, believes it can use its collective wealth to plan for the long term and build these power plants safely with the goal of accommodating growth in a way that prevents pollution.

Groundbreaking efforts in Cuba

While the People’s Republic of China is the socialist country with the largest economy and most resources at a national level, other socialist countries have made their own contributions to fighting climate change. Many of these efforts were undertaken out of necessity due to the countries’ positions as nations oppressed by U.S. imperialism, but embraced for the positive effects they have brought about.

In the 1990s, Cuba went through an incredibly difficult time in what is called the “Special Period” after the dismantling of socialism in the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the state. Nearly overnight, Cuba’s largest trading partner was no more and, due to the U.S. imposed blockade, foreign imports of oil and fertilizers were no longer available to the island nation. They had to innovate in order to survive and in the process reduced their dependence on fossil fuels.

With fuel to run tractors and trucks in short supply, agricultural products on large farms became difficult to harvest and ship to the population in cities. In response, the Cuban government began practicing intensive urban farming on state-

owned plots in the cities.

These “Organipónicos,” as they are known, are cultivated with advanced organic methods to increase yields without synthetic fertilizers and because the fields are already in the cities, the amount of fossil fuels needed to be burned to transport them is greatly reduced.

Cuba, known internationally for its sugar production, also uses the waste from the harvest to reduce their fossil fuel usage in ways that are uncommon in capitalist countries. By locating power plants designed to burn the waste products of sugar refining in major agricultural areas and near refineries, Cuba has tapped into an efficient and renewable form of electricity that avoids fossil fuels.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) also went through its own period of intense hardship in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, known there as the “Arduous March.” They, too, were cut off from oil imports and fertilizers.

The issue in the DPRK became how to irrigate their fields without oil to run the pumps that supplied water to the fields. In response, the country launched a popular campaign to construct massive dams in the mountains of the country which would allow stored water to flow downhill to the fields via gravity instead of using pumps. These dams were constructed mostly without the assistance of heavy machinery and represented

a countrywide mobilization of the people to improve the country.

Additionally, Vietnam faced great devastation at the hands of the U.S. military during the 1960s and 1970s, including chemical warfare in the form of Agent Orange and other toxic compounds that killed many Vietnamese people and much of their natural environment. Since then, under the guidance of the socialist government, the nation has planted millions of trees, which not only clean the air but also sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in the forest.

These examples are just some of the ways that the world’s socialist societies have taken steps to preserve the environment and which reduce their contribution to global climate change. To be sure, none of these societies are examples of the full potential for humanity to live with minimal harmful impacts on the environment. However, their actions show that their social systems based on public ownership of the principal means of production and long-term planning are the basis for the all encompassing action that is needed to prevent disastrous climate change.

If these countries can do so much good with so much less wealth than that held by the United States, what could we do if we got rid of the bankers and CEOs that rule this country and decided to use our wealth for human needs, including preventing climate change? 🌱

Baltimore caravan demands protection for prisoners



SSL PHOTO BY MIRANDA ETEL

By Lev Koufax

On April 18, progressive working-class activists in Baltimore held a car caravan in solidarity with those currently incarcerated in Maryland jails and prisons. The caravan, organized by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and the Peoples Power Assembly, demanded that Gov. Larry Hogan immediately begin to release prisoners from facilities that have become Covid-19 hotspots.

The situation developed even though local news outlets warned for over a month that prisons were prime candidates for severe coronavirus outbreaks. Since that time, over 100 cases of the virus have been reported in Maryland prisons. One prisoner has died. In all likelihood, those reported are far lower than the actual number of cases.

Individuals inside Maryland prisons have described terrible conditions and a complete lack of preparedness. Prisoners have been denied soap, showers, any personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical care. Prisoners with symp-

toms have been left to their own devices inside solitary cells.

For these reasons, the Baltimore caravan demanded proper care for prisoners during the coronavirus pandemic. Cars were covered with signs demanding “Free them all!” and “No bars but soap bars!”

One car had the names of prisoners currently being denied PPE and medical treatment in a prison in Cumberland, Md.: James Young III, Alfred Shinard, Tracy Skinner and Terrance Mahogany.

Members of the caravan chanted out their windows against institutions that are simply concentration camps for working-class and oppressed people.

As the caravan passed the Baltimore prisons, hundreds of prisoners could be heard out of their cell windows chanting, whistling and whooping in support. At one point, prisoners even started chanting along with the caravan. This included a chant decrying the lack of action taken by Baltimore Mayor Jack Young. The moment was powerful and filled with solidarity. 🌱

Mensaje del ICAP en tiempos de Covid-19: BLOQUEO NO, SOLIDARIDAD SI

La Habana, 9 de abril de 2020

Estimados amigos y amigas:

Con profunda convicción humanista, el gobierno y pueblo de Cuba ofrecen al mundo, una vez más, el ejemplo de solidaridad militante en momentos en que el planeta se enfrenta a la pandemia global del nuevo coronavirus Sars Cov-2, la Covid-19, la cual ya ha cobrado la vida a más de 70 mil personas en el orbe en muy poco tiempo.

En época de Covid-19 los ojos del mundo observan con esperanzas a Cuba y Cuba, en medio de un bloqueo inhumano y genocida, no ha dudado en responderle: un ejército de batas blancas integrado por más de 593 profesionales de la salud, de ellos 338 mujeres, organizados en 15 brigadas del Contingente Henry Reeve, ya prestan sus servicios en Europa, América Latina y el Caribe, fieles a la máxima martiana y fidelista, ratificada por nuestro Presidente Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez: “Cuba no anda de pedigüeña por el mundo, anda de hermana”.

Contrariamente a nuestro desinteresado gesto, el Presidente Trump fomenta injuriosas campañas anticubanas para intentar desacreditar los principios de humanidad y solidaridad sobre los cuales descansa nuestra colaboración médica, defensora de la atención a la salud como un derecho humano.

Este momento pone al descubierto la fragilidad de las sociedades de consumo del sistema capitalista y las deficiencias de su sistema sanitario; resultado de las políticas antipopulares implementadas por los gobiernos neoliberales subordinados al gran capital y al imperialismo yanqui. Como nunca antes la humanidad demanda solidaridad. Urge unirnos y fomentar la cooperación

internacional.

Nuestro Instituto reconoce con orgullo el apoyo brindado por las asociaciones de amistad, organizaciones políticas, parlamentarias, sindicalistas y demás fuerzas que conforman el Movimiento Mundial de Solidaridad con Cuba, a nuestros colaboradores en los países donde ya laboran en campaña contra el COVID 19, así como los mensajes de agradecimiento enviados al gobierno de Cuba y a su pueblo por la dimensión solidaria, humanitaria y altruista de la Revolución.

Para nuestros galenos también nuestro especial reconocimiento, respeto y admiración donde quiera que se encuentren. Ellos están enfrentando esta pandemia con altruismo dentro y fuera de Cuba, respondiendo al llamado del gobierno cubano y esparciendo la semilla humanista que nos legaran Martí y Fidel, en contraposición a las acciones como las de Estados Unidos y otros países de la OTAN, que gastan enormes presupuestos militares en detrimento de las condiciones de vida de sus poblaciones, fomentando el miedo, el odio y la desesperanza.

Asimismo, apreciamos la permanente solidaridad de todo el Movimiento que, ahora en tiempos del nuevo Coronavirus, no ha dejado de accionar para exigir el levantamiento del bloqueo a Cuba, ahora más criminal en las circunstancias



actuales, demandando también la aplicación plena de la Resolución “Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por Estados Unidos de América”, aprobada en el 2019 en ONU por la inmensa mayoría de sus miembros.

Juntos ganaremos esta batalla que hoy pone a prueba la solidaridad entre pueblos y gobiernos y, cuando suceda, nos abrazaremos con gran alegría por la victoria contra la pandemia que hoy nos azota, para darle un viva a la vida y celebrar en hermandad el 60 aniversario de nuestro ICAP.

Fraternalmente,

Fernando González Llort

Presidente, Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP)

ICAP message in the time of Covid-19: BLOCKADE NO, SOLIDARITY YES



Havana, April 9, 2020

To the World Movement of Solidarity with Cuba

Dear friends,

With deep humanistic conviction, the government and people of Cuba offer the world, once again, the example of militant solidarity at a time when the planet is facing the global pandemic of the new coronavirus Sars Cov-2, Covid-19, which has already claimed the lives of more than 70,000 people in the world in a very short time.

In the time of Covid-19 the eyes of the world look with hope to Cuba, and Cuba, in the midst of an inhuman and genocidal blockade, did not hesitate to respond with an army of white coats made up of more than 593 health professionals, 338 of them women, organized in 15 brigades of the Henry Reeve Contingent, already providing their services in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, faithful to the maxims of Martí and Fidel, ratified by our President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez: “Cuba is not a beggar to the world, but a sister.”

Contrary to our humble gesture, President Trump encourages insulting anti-Cuban campaigns to try to discredit the principles of humanity and solidarity on which our medical collaboration defending the human right to health care rests.

This moment reveals the fragility of the consumer societies of the capitalist system and the deficiencies of its health system, as a result of the anti-popular policies of neoliberal governments subordinated to big capital and U.S. imperialism.

Humankind demands solidarity as never before. It is urgent to unite and promote international cooperation.

Our institute proudly recognizes the support of the friendship associations, political organizations, members of parliament, trade unionists and other political forces that make up the world movement for solidarity with Cuba, our collaborators in the countries where they are already campaigning against Covid-19, as well such as the messages of appreciation sent to the government of Cuba and its people for the solidarity, humanist and altruistic dimension of the Revolution.

For our doctors also our special recognition, respect and admiration wherever they are. They are confronting this pandemic with altruism inside and outside Cuba, as a response of the call of the Cuban government to spread the humanitarian seed of Martí and Fidel, in opposition to actions like those of the United States and other NATO countries, which spend huge military budgets to the detriment of the living conditions of their populations, fostering fear, hatred and hopelessness.

In the same vein, we appreciate the permanent solidarity of the entire movement that, now in the times of the new coronavirus, has not



stopped acting to demand the lifting of the blockade against Cuba, much more criminal in the current circumstances, also demanding the full application of Resolution “Necessity to end the economic, commercial and

financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba,” approved in 2019 at the UN by the vast majority of its members.

Together we will win this battle that today tests solidarity between peoples and governments and, when it happens, we will embrace with great joy the victory against the pandemic that is striking us today, to give life to life and celebrate in brotherhood the 60th anniversary of our ICAP.

Fraternally,

Fernando González Llort

President, Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP)

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